

# **ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY**

## **TIPS FOR CONSUMERS**



Developed by the Assistive Technology Workgroup  
of the Milwaukee County Commission on Aging  
Advisory Council.



### **Assistive Technology Resource Manual Subcommittee (2/2008)**

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Cover Photos: Thanks to IndependenceFirst



### **WHAT IS A GATEKEEPER?**

Gatekeeper Organizations are four local non-profit  
resources with expertise in identifying and selecting  
adaptive equipment.

They can be contacted for ideas, information on local  
resources, help navigating the maze of funding  
options, equipment trial opportunities, and  
assessments.

This brochure was developed in 2008 and updated in 2011.

## GATEKEEPER ORGANIZATIONS

### ★ Things to know before you call a gatekeeper:

- What is the consumer's diagnosis?
- What kind of insurance/funding is available?
- Are there any other conditions?
- Have they used this kind of equipment in the past?
- Is there any other relevant information such as:
  - evaluations
  - how the disability affects the person
  - homeowner/renter status
  - family composition

#### **INDEPENDENCEFIRST**

**(414) 291-7520**

540 S 1st St.  
Milwaukee, WI 53204

[www.independencefirst.org](http://www.independencefirst.org)

**Age Group Served:** All  
**Target Disability Group:** All

**Assistive Technology Services:**

Assessments, advocacy, information & referral, and equipment trials.

#### **BADGER ASSOCIATION**

#### **OF THE BLIND & VISUALLY HANDICAPPED**

**(414) 258-9200**

912 N. Hawley Road  
Milwaukee, WI 53213

**Toll Free (877) 258-9200**

[www.badgerassoc.org](http://www.badgerassoc.org)

**Age Group Served:** Adults  
**Target Disability Group:** Blind/Low Vision

**Assistive Technology Services:**

Assessments, advocacy, information & referral, training, equipment sales.

#### **CENTER FOR DEAF-BLIND PERSONS, INC.**

**(414) 481-7477**

**V/TTY/Telebraille**

[www.deaf-blind.org](http://www.deaf-blind.org)

3195 South Superior Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53207

**Age Group Served:** Adults  
**Target Disability Group:** Blind/Low Vision AND  
Deaf/Hard of Hearing

**Assistive Technology Services:** Assessments, advocacy, information & referral, training.

#### **CENTER FOR COMMUNICATION, HEARING AND DEAFNESS**

**(414) 604-2200 (Voice)**

**(888) 742-7651 (TTY)**

**(800) 755-7994 (Toll Free)**

[www.cdhhwi.org](http://www.cdhhwi.org)

10243 W. National Avenue  
West Allis, WI 53227

**Age Group Served:** All  
**Target Disability Group:** Deaf/Hard of Hearing

**Assistive Technology Services:** Assessments, information and referral, equipment sales and rental, training and installation.

# CONSUMER TIPS

## ★ When you think about buying adaptive equipment ASK...

1. What funding source will be used? What costs are covered?
2. Does the person recommending the purchase have a financial interest in the equipment?
3. What are the benefits? Are there any draw backs? Is there a compromise?
4. Where and how will the device be used?
5. Will the equipment fit into the house, bedroom, bathroom, vehicle or other places it needs to go?
6. Can it be used on the bus, or in a paratransit van?
7. Will the device interfere with activities like eating, using the phone, rolling under a table, performing self care activities?
8. Can an attendant/caregiver lift it/move it without hurting themselves?
9. Will the user be comfortable using it?
10. Will training be required in order to use this device? If so, how much, who provides it, and is there a fee?
11. Does the device have a warranty or service agreement? What are the terms? What is covered?
12. Who is responsible for paying for repairs or service agreements?
13. How often will professional maintenance/service be required?
14. Is daily or weekly maintenance required? If so, what needs to be done?

**WISE CONSUMERS CHECK THE BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU BEFORE BUYING**

[www.wisconsin.bbb.org](http://www.wisconsin.bbb.org)

(414) 847-6000 (metro Milwaukee)

## ★ When you think about remodeling or building ASK...

1. Is the contractor or architect licensed and bonded?
2. Do they carry general liability and worker's compensation insurance?
3. Will they provide a written lien waiver?
4. Are they a members of NARI (National Association of the Remodeling Industry) or NAHB (National Association of Home Builder's)?
5. Will they pull all required building permits?
6. Do they guarantee their work and for how long?
7. Who will be in charge of the job?
8. Who is responsible for cleaning up?

## ★ When you think about buying a hearing aid ASK...

1. What are the credentials of the audiologist/hearing aid dispenser?
2. Do they fit a variety of hearing aid brands or just THEIR brand?
3. Is there a charge for the hearing evaluation or is it built into the cost of a hearing aid?
4. What technology is best for the user? (analog or digital)
5. What style of hearing aid will best suit the users hearing needs and lifestyle?
6. What features does the hearing aid have (directional microphones, a telecoil, multiple program settings)?
7. What services are included in the price of the hearing aid?
8. What is the return/exchange period for the hearing aid?
9. What is the warranty for the hearing aid?
10. What assistive devices or accessories can be used with the hearing aid?